

**NEWINGTON PARKS & RECREATION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
TUESDAY, February 11, 2014
Amended Minutes**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Kathy Zolad called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm

II. ROLL CALL

Board: Eileen Francolino, Mary Udice, Richard Khentigan, Ed Marchion, Ken Leggo, Robert Fresen, Bill DeBlasio, Jen Win-Johnson, Don Woods via phone.

Board Members Absent:

Staff: Superintendent Bruce Till

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF November 19, 2013 and January 14, 2014

Richard Khentigan made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 19, 2013 and January 14, 2014 meeting. Ken Leggo seconded the motion. The motion passed with a 9-0 vote.

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

None

V. CORRESPONDENCE/COMMUNICATIONS/REPORTS

The November and December schedule of the monthly report of what the staff has been involved in were discussed at last month's meeting and emailed. Bruce recapped that Basketball is the largest youth program and is in full swing at the moment with over 600 kids involved. Karen, the Rec Supervisor, has been handling that program and working with the parents, coaches and kids. Sharon is working on the brochures and involved in the preschool program. Michele is involved with the special events that are run by Parks and Rec Department. Bruce had a meeting regarding the extravaganza getting logistics and contracts started.

2014 Schedule of Meetings: The meetings have been changed to the second Tuesday of the month and the monthly report will be sent out the following week. Mary Udice asked about a 7pm start for the monthly meeting but for now the meeting time will remain at 7:30pm.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

Community Center:

There are new members on the Building Committee since this project has begun who need to be caught up to speed on everything that has happened. There have been several meetings with the Construction Manager and Architect. Bruce mentioned he has made some compromises with this project but he can only make so many in order for this community center to meet the needs for the public for now and in the future. He has brought down the cost of the Community Center by recommending a metal building and cutting back on the square footage of the break out rooms. However, Bruce has been firm that two (2) Gymnasiums are essential for the new center. The Town Hall Renovations budget has doubled with the total project for the Town Hall and Community Center coming in over 30 million dollars because the cost has doubled for the Town

Hall renovations it has been said that the Community Center shouldn't be the priority in this project it should be the Town Hall. The Master plan that was done said the existing Mortensen center needed to be expanded and also a new one be built.

Update from the Building Committee Representatives, Jen and Bill mentioned again that the community center came in under budget. The community center is used more than Town Hall. Every department in the Town Hall currently needs more space approx. 16,000 square feet is needed. The Community Center needs to be double of its current size to accommodate the Parks and Rec programs.

Bruce Till mentioned that it is a good idea that members from the board attend the building committee meets and encourage the public and youth organizations to also attend and voice their opinion on how important it is to have a stand-alone community to help resolve the push back from the public and members of the committee and help hear the positive side of the Parks and Recreation proposal.

Eileen mentioned that schedule of the use of the building for the programs should be brought to the building committee meeting to show them how often the building is used for the Parks and Rec programs and to show that the Parks Department is the biggest user of the building with the most limited space.

Another important factor for the need of a stand-alone community center Bruce mentioned is that if the community center is in with the Town Hall project there will not be a community center for over a year and no place for all the programs that are run by the Parks and Rec Department. Youth programs would have to be cut back as well as adult programs and would have to find other places to relocate the programs.

March 3rd there is a Building Committee meeting and all interested parties should attend.

Mill Pond Gazebo: Don and Bruce met with Andy Mandell and he has committed to donate \$10,000 dollars to this project. The new pavilion structure has been ordered and PO has been issued for it. The existing gazebo will be dismantled and put at another neighborhood park that does not have a shelter. A plaque will be made for the new structure to thank the Mandell family for their generous contribution to the town. Kathy mentioned also having a pencil drawing of the pavilion be done for the family as a nice gift for them but something will be done for the family from the Board.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

Election of Officers:

Kathy Zolad asked for nominations for the position of Secretary

Motion was made by Ed Marchion to nominate Eileen Francolino for the position of Secretary. Bill DeBlasio seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Kathy Zolad turned the meeting over to Eileen Francolino

Eileen asked for nominations for the position of Vice Chairperson

Motion was made by Ed Marchion to nominate Kathy Zolad for the position of Vice Chairperson. Ritch Khentigan seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Eileen asked for nominations for the position of Chairperson

Motion was made by Ed Marchion to nominate Don Woods for the position of Chairperson. Ritch Khentigan seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.

Eileen turned the meeting back over to Kathy Zolad

Memorial Consideration for Dennis Bonitsky: Eileen sent the family a sympathy card from the Board. Bruce had a discussion with the Rec. Supervisors to discuss what the Parks Department could do in honor of Dennis. They would like to put a granite engraved bench and a tree in the cemetery. Bruce is working with Mark and Steve at the cemetery to see where they could put this. Donations are welcome from the Board and others who work for the town and send Dennis' wife a note with a list of donors.

Comments from Don Woods via Phone:

Community Center:

He emphasized how important it is that the Board and the two committee members, Jen and Bill, stay focused on a community center that supports our needs. The need for the community center has been confirmed by Bruce, staff and the master Plan. If the committee should decide to combine the two projects back into the renovated town hall project, this will result in a major disruption of the town programs and to the community for at least a year. The prior committee looked into that option, coming to the conclusion that the stand alone community center would better serve the town hall space and demands, and the Parks and Rec. Department's needs now and in the future. The Board hopefully will agree that we should do everything in our power to get the community center the people of Newington need.

Mill Pond Gazebo:

Don would like to discuss at the April meeting the possibility of a small re-dedication ceremony when the new pavilion is completed. It is something the towns people should be aware of the generosity of the Mandell family.

Election of Officers:

Don is thankful for the continued support by re-electing him as Chairperson, Kathy as Vice-Chair and Eileen as Secretary.

Memorial for Dennis:

Don was happy to hear there will be a memorial bench and tree planted for Dennis, he certainly deserves it.

VIII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

None

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: A motion was made by Kathy Zolad to adjourn. Bill DeBlasio seconded the motion, all were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 8:12 pm with a 9-0 vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Jay